

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY PRAIA

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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E.O. 11652:N/A

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TAGS:PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, APRIL 19, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY THE
OFFICIAL VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

SPOKESMAN: I HAVE A STATEMENT TO MAKE. A QUESTION WAS RAISED AT THE APRIL 18 BRIEFING REGARDING THE WILLINGNESS OF VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS TO ATTEND A MEETING OF ALL PARTIES TO THE RHODESIA DISPUTE. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAS AGREED TO MEET WITH THE OTHER PARTIES TO THE RHODESIA DISPUTE. THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE SALISBURY TALKS HAVE AGREED TO GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE US-UK SUGGESTION FOR SUCH A MEETING. I THINK THE ASSERTION WAS MADE IN ONE OF THE QUESTIONS HERE THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD REFUSED TO AGREE TO SUCH A MEETING. THAT IS INCORRECT.

Q: TOM, ON THE DAY OF THE CARTER MOTOCARDE INTO MONROVIA IN LIBERIA, A BOY NAMED MICHAEL CAVANAUGH, THE SON OF ONE OF OUR AID OFFICERS, GEORGE CAVANAUGH, WAS HIT BY A VEHICLE AND KILLED, AND HIS BODY SUBSEQUENTLY RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES FOR BURIAL. --

-- AND MY QUESTION IS: WHY ARE THERE THESE CONFLICTING REPORTS UNLESS THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT MICHAEL CAVANAUGH MAY HAVE BEEN HIT BY THE PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE?

A: WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SON OF AN EMPLOYEE OF THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, STATIONED IN LIBERIA, WAS KILLED DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT THERE. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE INCIDENT OCCURRED AFTER THE UNCLASSIFIED

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MOTORCADE OF THE PARTY HAD PASSED WHERE EVER THE DEATH OCCURRED.

LET ME SAY THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS WRITTEN AN EXTENSIVE LETTER TO THE PARENTS OF THE BOY CONCERNED AND OBVIOUSLY, THERE IS GREAT REGRET ABOUT IT.

Q: HAS THERE BEEN ANY REACTION TO THE ACCUSATION BY P.W. BOTHA, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF SOUTH AFRICA, THAT WE LEFT SOUTH AFRICA RECKLESSLY IN THE LURCH IN 1976, IN ANGOLA?

A: NO, THERE IS NO REACTION TO THAT ASSERTION. THERE WAS ALSO IN THE WIRE SERVICE STORIES THAT WE SAW, AN ASSERTION THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD FLOWN ITS AIRCRAFT INTO ANGOLA. I BELIEVE THE DEFENSE MINISTER SAID "INTO SOUTH AFRICAN-HELD BASES IN ANGOLA." LET ME SAY THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED BEFORE. THE DECISION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO INTERVENE IN ANGOLA WAS MADE UNILATERALLY BY THAT GOVERNMENT IN WHAT IT CONSIDERED TO BE ITS OWN INTEREST.

THE UNITED STATES DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THAT DECISION.
THE UNITED STATES PROVIDED NO ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES
IN ANGOLA OR ELSEWHERE.

NO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT DELIVERED ARMS TO ANY
RECIPIENTS IN ANGOLA (BY WHICH I MEAN TO SAY NO AMERICAN
AIRCRAFT LANDED IN ANGOLA.)

Q: TOM, WAS THERE ANOTHER ACCIDENT INVOLVING U.S. OFFICIALS
IN NIGERIA?

A: I DON'T KNOW.

Q: WELL, LET ME ASK YOU A FOLLOW-UP ON THAT: IF THERE WAS
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NO INVOLVEMENT OF THIS TRAGIC ACCIDENT, NO INVOLVEMENT
OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE WHY WOULD THE PRESIDENT
WRITE AN EXTENSIVE LETTER? IS HE IN THE HABIT OF WRITING
LETTERS TO ALL OF THE --

A: I SUGGEST IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY THE PRESIDENT WRITES
LETTERS, YOU ASK THE WHITE HOUSE. I AM NOT IN A POSITION
TO TELL YOU WHY THE PRESIDENT WRITES HIS LETTERS.
CHRISTOPHER

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